242 When a field is nearing out, the corn growing shorter and bearing
241 fewer ears to the stalk,(1) the woman makes a final planting of corn, sticking cuttings of manioc between the rows. Most of these cuttings take root and grow. It takes two or three years for the tubers of this plant to mature in an old field, but in some parts of the country where manioc is set in new land it matures within a year. The leaves of the plant are used as a vegetable with corn-meal, and manioc meal is used as a basic substitute when corn is short.

The onake or river-garden

241 In August a woman plants her onake, near a stream in the alluvial soil, or in some river bed. Here she plants corn which will be ready for eating during the January period of food shortage, as well as cabbage and other vegetables.

Organisation of labour

[462] Formerly men did the heavier work of clearing new fields, although, as has been noted above, since the introduction of wage labour much of the work is left to the women. Men may also have their own fields, the produce of which is sold to provide ready cash to clothe the family, pay taxes etc. The women's fields are intended to feed the family. Children help their parents in the fields, but also have their own plots. Gardens are made by each household, i.e. by each wife where there are a number of wives. Neighbours often co-operate during the harvesting [476] period, after which beer is supplied by the owner of the field which has been harvested.(2)

HUNTING(3)

796 Most men and boys hunt, and women and children may help in burning
224 the grass and driving the game during the annual communal fire-hunts.
[463] But the professional hunter or ukongo is a recognised specialist, qualified by specific training and dependent on his knowledge of hunting magic
[468] and ritual for his success. A boy becomes a ukongo by an apprenticeship of about two years to an older hunter. This period culminates in a ceremony of inauguration, which may be attended by all the villagers but at which only the professional hunters dance. Several ukongo provide game, which is cooked for the feast; the dancing commences but the novice remains still and silent until he feels the "spirit of the head"; he then rises and distributes game to the villagers. Blood from the animals killed is sprinkled over his weapons, which have been made by the ukongo who has trained him. From now on his daily life is subject to certain ritual prohibitions: he must not sleep with his wife on the night before going on a hunt, special food and cooking-pots must be used for him, etc.

680 A professional hunter usually works alone, using bows and arrows,

(1) There is no information concerning the length of the farming-cycle.
(2) Childs, personal communication.
(3) See Hambly, *Bantu Studies*, 1934, and *Ovimbundu*, 1934, pp.140-5; Cushman, 1944, pp.113-20.

Ngundu is surrounded by a stick palisade except on that side of the headman's household which is adjacent to the rocks used as a club-house. The village itself (and each section) is divided up into compounds, each of which contains one to three houses,(1) and palisades divide one compound from the next; between are paths leading to the ocilo and out of the village. Small gardens for tobacco, maize and beans are within the compounds, and the larger fields lie outside the village at from thirty minutes' to an hour's walk. In the headman's section of Ngundu there are 25 household containing 32 houses in all. Each house has its own granary (*ocilo*) and a small chicken-coop built on stilts, and of all the houses only six have separate kitchens (*ocima*). Most households had separate pens for pigs, goats and sheep for the night,(2) and at one side of the headman's compound there is a common corral for the nine cattle owned by the section. Only the headman had a spirit-hut (*etumbo*), used also as a storehouse, for entertaining his guests, and for his own use should he wish to sleep apart from his wives.

Chiefs' villages or olombolo (singular cabolo) are often surrounded by a belt of tall trees.(3) The chief's compound (the *ilombe*) is larger than those of other villagers, and, according to Hambly,(4) usually contains: the chief's house, which always has a separate sleeping-room; a house and a kitchen for each of his wives; a tomb for the burial of the chief and his wives; a house of meditation for the chief, and pens for pigs and chickens.

Umbundu houses are usually circular, but sometimes rectangular, and made of wattle and daub, with thatched roofs. Sometimes huts are divided by matting into a living-room and a sleeping-room. Cooking is often done in the house itself, but sometimes a separate hut is built as a kitchen.(5)

The *onjango* (the Men's Club House) consists of a cone-shaped roof set on stout hardwood poles instead of a wall, and left open so that those for whom there may be no place inside may still see and hear what takes place within.(6)

Villages are moved when fields are exhausted and others are not available nearby(7) or, more often, when there has been illness or death in the village, which implies that some action displeasing to the spirits has been committed. (No information is available concerning the usual length of life of a village.) When the new site is chosen, the headman's fire in the old village is extinguished, and a procession starts, led by a boy carrying the sacred bows (*olonji*) of each ascendant who is now a guardian spirit of the family (i.e. the olusa), and a girl carrying the sacred chest (*ocisanga*) containing the relics (*ociye*) and the bells of iguana skin.(8) On arriving at the site the boy and girl cut and plant the

(1) In this section there were 13 goats, 30 sheep, 100 pigs and about 200 chickens. (Childs, *op.cit.*, p.31) (2) Ibid.

(3) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.208 *et.al.* It was a custom of the Nyangela peoples to plant trees round the village and dedicate them to deceased chiefs. (See McCulloch 1950, p.68.) There is no evidence that the trees surrounding Umbundu villages have any ritual significance, although the custom may have been taken over from the conquered Nyangela peoples.

(4) *Op.cit.*, p.208. (5) Ibid., p.30

(6) Childs, personal communication.

(7) Due often to European settlement. (8) See below, p.47.

night in the otumbo praying to or communing with ancestral spirits, when the occasion arises; Suku is regarded as too remote to receive prayers. 693 613

While cooking, a woman may spill a little meal on the ground for the spirits; at a meal, a person may spill a little food or beer for the same purpose. A portion of the meat at a feast may likewise be sacrificed, but it is often a less desirable portion, such as the intestines.(1) 782

Agricultural rituals were held before planting, at which time the headman and his wife had intercourse in their field and sacred seed from the chief's granary was distributed, a few grains to be mixed with the seed to be planted on each plot. When the maize began to ripen a few ears were sent to the chief before any were eaten.(2) 241 759

DIVINERS(3)

The word ocisakundo is used both for a diviner and for a maker of medicines. To distinguish the two, the diviner may be called ocisakundo congualo ("of the basket"), the herbalist ocisakundo coviti ("of trees or sticks"). Some practitioners are both diviner and herbalist. A female diviner is called cangalo.(4) An ocisakundo frequently specialises in a certain kind of case;(5) and among the members of the profession there are many degrees of proficiency. One may work only in his own village, another may be consulted on matters of concern to the whole district or chiefdom; others go on professional journeys carrying their baskets, and accumulate profits in animals and cloth. The greater the reputation of the diviner, the greater the charges he makes for his services. 796 463

The tasks of the ocisakundo are:-

(a) To discover the cause of sickness, death, or any evil which has befallen the individual or the community. Sickness and death are always believed to be due either to the workings of spirits who are demanding sacrifice, or to living enemies who have malicious spirits under their control or who have bought potent charms. The diviner, after consulting the spirit who speaks in and through his basket, names the spirit who is causing the trouble and tells the victim what its demands are, or, if the enemy is a living person, indicates in a general manner from whence the trouble comes, e.g. to a woman "Your baskets are too well made; you are hated because of them", or, to a man, "This illness was found on a journey taken to collect a debt". If requested, the diviner makes a counter-charm to offset that which has caused the ill. 787 753

(b) To interpret omens and dreams.

(c) To give advice on personal problems.

(d) To dispense medicines and charms.

(e) To bring or withhold rain, or to see who is guilty of withholding it. [789]

(1) Ibid., see also Cashmore, loc.cit.
(2) Childe, personal communication.
(3) Based on Tucker, 1940.
(4) Bentley, (3) 1904.
(5) Ibid.

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Any boy who wishes to become a blacksmith may be trained for the work. It is not necessary that his father should have been a blacksmith. When the youth begins his training he must be eighteen years of age and physically robust. His first duties are the beating of hot iron on the anvil; he is also required to collect and soften fragments of iron. He works very hard but is never allowed to finish anything; the master has to complete the work. 326 874

At the end of two years the youth asks the master blacksmith to examine him. What is more important still, the master is asked to make the heavy hammer (*onjundo*), which is used for beating hot iron on the largest anvil (Plate XXXVIII, Fig. 1). There is no doubt as to the sacredness of this hammer, which is a symbol of the completion of apprenticeship. There is also the idea of the master handing on his skill to the pupil by personally making and presenting the tools. I made repeated efforts before being able to purchase one of these hammers; finally it was procurable only at a high price. The value is due to ritualistic associations, the large quantity of iron used in the making, and the labor required to weld the head to the shaft.

On the day of his inception the boy has to purchase four chickens, two male and two female, one pup, and a goat. The master blacksmith makes all the tools for the apprentice, but ritual centers chiefly in the fabrication of the big hammer (*onjundo*). While the master is making this the boy stands on the small anvil which is close to the ground, between the forge and the large anvil under the tree. 326 796

When the hammer (*onjundo*) is made, and while it is still red-hot, the handle is pushed into the belly of the dog. The goat and the four chickens are then killed. All the tools are brought together so that blood from the slaughtered animals may be sprinkled over them. The flesh of these animals is eaten with corn and beans. "The blacksmith calls many people to help him, and they like to eat the food," concluded my interpreter. [782]

During the entire ceremony, also throughout the feast, the boy stands on the anvil. There he remains until the master says, "You may speak and tell us what name you want." Perhaps the boy says, "I am Ndumbu." The people in the crowd clap hands and make a trilling with their fingers in their open mouths. The boy steps from the anvil; he is a blacksmith. My interpreter continued, "He must work hard and people must pay him. He used to work hard, but the master took the money."

There was an ancient belief that a blacksmith owed his skill to the help of the spirit of a person he had killed. Wooden effigies 326 778

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

338 feet. A trench about eighteen inches deep is dug for the poles (akose), which form the framework. The wattle work is tied to the uprights with strong stripe of red bark before the plastering is begun.
341 The old type of Umbundu house was round, but most of the houses
171 now show a transition to square or rectangular forms (Plate XLIV, Fig. 2).

[531] Exterior wall-painting is found only in the northern districts of Angola (Plate LXXXIX, Fig. 2). Between Saurimo and Malange in the north, rectangular, painted houses are frequently seen. Wall-painting is a cultural trait from the Congo region where that form of decoration is common.

796 The method of forming a village site and the right of the chief to
621 allot land have been described. The house of the chief is the first to be erected. There is drinking of beer to celebrate the completion of the village, and the pots of beer have to be stirred with the claws of chickens; these have been killed to provide blood for sprinkling the walls of the new houses. Village chiefs go through the process of stirring and drinking. The medicine-man drinks first, then he offers the cup to the chief.

344 The communal house is built by the united efforts of all men of
476 the village. Ngonga says, "The king never helps with any of the
[485] building, but he talks very much." The guest house is also built
644 by communal labor. The king of the ombala of Ngalangi told me that a king always uses the house of his predecessor, which must not be pulled down. No repairs are permitted and the house is used until it is absolutely untenable.

359 The interior of a commoner's house has three hearth stones in the
342 middle of the floor, which is of hard mud beaten down with a heavy wooden implement called ocikasulo. The ceremonial placing of the stones has been described in discussing marriage. There is no chimney, consequently the walls and roof are blackened with smoke. The junction of roof and walls provides pockets for the reception of small articles. On the floor near the walls may be several large beer pots. The dark smoky interior is almost intolerable. The sleeping
352 room is sometimes separated from the living room by matting. The bed is made from a cross-work of sticks supported on four Y-shaped posts, one at each corner. On the bed are coarse sleeping mats and possibly a modern blanket.

356 The miscellaneous contents of the hut are gourds, dippers, cooking
252 pots of several sizes, pounders, and baskets. In many of the huts I found cooking going on in the general room, but frequently a sepa-

h Hambly E-6 (1929-1930) 1934 FP12 Mbundu FP13

not an Ocimbundu, was dressed in only a skirt of cloth, and his equipment consisted of a reed whistle and a hair switch made from a cow's tail. 791

The dance was a slow revolution without any violent leaping. The man held his arms upward, fully extended, and went through the motions of drawing rain from above; then he made slow arm movements suggestive of spreading the rain all around. At times he stood quite still and gave a shrill whistle. The hair switch was constantly twirled and flourished.

POISON ORDEAL

Evidence presented in chapters VI and VII will show that the poison ordeal is a widely spread Negro trait, and that administration of the ordeal is connected with legal proceedings during which the poison cup is usually given to the suspects or litigants by a medicine-man. 695 791

This ordeal as practised among the Ovimbundu and other people of Angola is in conformity with the general Negro procedure. Nganga thinks that the poison ordeal of the old type is still practised secretly. According to the old law the poison cup affected an innocent man by making him vomit, while the guilty person succumbed.

Nganga states that a form of poison ordeal which exists today is as follows: The medicine-man holds out two potatoes, one of which is poisoned while the other is innocuous. The poisoned man does not die but he becomes so ill that he confesses his guilt. This use of potatoes has been fully described in connection with legal procedure (chapter VI).

The guilt or innocence of suspects is tested by giving poison to chickens brought to the medicine-man by the accused men. He whose chicken dies is the guilty person.

CEREMONIAL FIRE

New fire is made during epidemic sickness, at the accession of a king, and at the building of a new village. On such occasions the twirling method is employed. The fire made is called *ondalu*, which is the ordinary word for fire. 372 791 796

When an epidemic of sickness occurs the chief of the village takes a present of eight yards of cloth to the medicine-man and asks the cause of the visitation. The medicine-man replies, "Your fire is dirty and worn out, you must have new fire."

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 [illegible] FP13

372 The village chief takes this news to the people, saying, "Tomorrow
791 we must find a goat, a chicken, and a pig, so that we may kill them.
796 Then we must make a new fire." The chief pays for these animals.

Next day the medicine-man starts a fire by the twirling method, and as soon as the fire has been kindled he kills a fowl whose blood is allowed to drop on the fire and the wood near-by. The sacrificial goat and pig are treated in the same way. Sometimes a boy who is learning to be a medicine-man kills these animals. Meat from each of the animals so sacrificed is cooked on this newly made fire, care being taken that each kind of meat is kept in a separate pot. There is no special pottery for this cooking. When the meat is cooked it is tasted by a girl from twelve to fourteen years of age who hands a portion to the chief, who distributes the meat among the village elders (*olosekulu*). The meat from the chicken, which must be fat, is the first to be distributed. A cock or a hen may be chosen, but if the latter is selected it must be *utenda;* that is to say, it must not have arrived at the egg-laying age.

Finally there is a distribution of meat among the villagers who have been present throughout the ceremony. The chief speaks, saying, "We wish good fortune to the new fire." Each person has to take the responsibility for quenching his own fire before the new one is ceremonially made. After the feast each father of a "restricted" family takes away a portion of the newly kindled fire.

796 There is sometimes a ceremonial purification of the village water
364 supply. Water is carried in a block of wood from the nearest stream, and to this water a few drops of blood from the sacrificed animals are added. The idea involved throughout is the renewal of health by the furnishing of new, unadulterated supplies of fire and water.

796 At the inaugural ceremony of a new king a similar proceeding
643 is followed. A chicken is killed for the purpose of supplying blood to sprinkle the new fire and on this occasion there is a ceremonial hunt. The king may or may not join the males of the hunting party; sometimes he sends a substitute.

A girl follows the king or his substitute carrying a basket (*ongalo*) in which round fruits from the tree *olosanga* are contained. Each of the fruits is wrapped round with the skin of the large lizard (*otata*). The object of the hunt is to kill a male antelope, the duiker (*ombombi*), and a hare (*ondimba*) which may be male or female. The hare is not called *ondimba* on this occasion, but receives the name for elephant (*onjamba*).

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The hare is not carried over the shoulder, but has a ceremonial conveyance slung on poles (*owanda*) which are supported on the shoulders of two or even four men. 796 643

Laying the evil of a village on a goat, which is then driven out to die, is an Umbundu custom. The scapegoat ceremony has a cleansing function similar in purpose to the rekindling of fire for the community. Cavazzi pictured and described the scapegoat ceremony in the seventeenth century, and Nganga informed me that he saw the rite twenty years ago. 793

PROHIBITIONS AND OMENS

There is a taboo against killing *oku kuku*, which is the yellow-backed duiker. When Nganga was sick he was forbidden to eat the flesh of the duiker (*ombumbi*); neither is this flesh to be eaten by people who suffer from dizziness. In former days women were not allowed to eat eggs. The flesh of sheep and goats is said to be indigestible for children between the ages of three and six years. The flesh of the lion, leopard, and hyena is forbidden as food for the king, but other people may eat it. The king is in fact forbidden to eat the flesh of any animal which has paws; neither may he eat flesh of the bush buck. A medicine-man must not eat flesh of a dog except before a ceremony for curing the sick. The taboo against dog's flesh applies also to the diet of a king. 262. [693]

A woman must not step over the legs of a male, neither must a man step over the legs of a woman; for to do so causes weakness of the knees. A man or woman may step over the legs of a child. 784

Omens are numerous. It is unfortunate to see a snake holding a frog, and the person who observes this should go to the medicine-man at once. When going to a village to be tried by the chief it is bad to meet some one who is carrying a bark rope, as this indicates binding and punishment. If a person who is setting out from home meets a woman carrying corn meal or any other white substance, he or she must take a little of the meal, whiten the face, and all will be well. A fly in the mouth is a good sign, because the fly knows where meat is to be obtained and is trying to lead the way. 787

A stranger visiting a village is pleased when a dog is the first animal to enter the guest house. Dogs are fed, so the entry of a dog is a sign that the visitor will receive food. On the contrary, the appearance of a goat is a bad omen, because goats are not fed; they pick up a frugal living as best they can. Other prohibitions and omens have been mentioned in discussing the pregnancy of women. [574]

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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become *isakulu* (queen) because she feared the unpleasant haunting by the spirits of former queens which is traditionally experienced by the holder of this office.[18] On one occasion Lussse himself offered to let me into the *olokoto* (the enclosure where the skulls of dead chiefs were kept) for the payment of five or ten escudos (1s. 9d. or 2s. 6d.) although the entry of anybody except the chief and possibly certain of his courtiers appears traditionally to have been forbidden under the penalty of death sent by the spirits. Even the surviving rites are confined to the chief's village; the first-fruits ceremony in which the whole chiefdom was involved disappeared a number of years ago. The association general in Umbundu country between the chiefs and paganism does not provide an added ritual sanction to the chief's power, but rather links him with what is felt to be a dying past, essentially unimportant, at the present day.

The chief may also have some of his time occupied with hearing cases. A good many minor disputes are solved by local adjudication, but there seems to be no specific division between cases that ought to come to the chief and those which can be arbitrated by somebody else. Elders from outside a chiefdom may be invited to adjudicate on a particular case. The old formality of legal procedure has largely disappeared, probably because all disputes at a local level can be carried to the post—hence any ruling by chief or elders is essentially dependent on its acceptance by the disputants.

Accusations of sorcery are rather different from other cases since the post does not believe them, although such an accusation is not in itself punishable. Sometimes suspected sorcerers are accused at the post of 'poisoning'.[19] Lussse told me that convicted sorcerers were fined a chicken, a goat and a pig. Gregorio, the chief of Menga, at first said, when I asked about this, that it was not possible to know who was a sorcerer. When, rather to his surprise, I mentioned the traditional basket test, he agreed and explained that people convicted by this test were sent as labourers to the post to satisfy whatever demand was being made for workers.

[18] Informants. See also Hastings, p. 43.

[19] Childs, p. 38.